

733
REPORTS

ON

DRUMMOND COUNTY RAILWAY

1897

OTTAWA, 2nd February, 1897.

DEAR MR. BLAIR.—In compliance with your request for information as to the general character of the road constructed by the Drummond County Railway Company from Ste. Rosalie Junction on the Grand Trunk Railway via Drummondville and St. Leonard to Moose Park, a distance of 73 miles, together with a branch of 17 miles in length from St. Leonard to Nicolet, and also my views as to the standard on which the balance of the road from Moose Park to its Junction with the Grand Trunk Railway near Chaudiere Bridge should be built, assuming that the line was to form a section of the Intercolonial Railway, I have to report:—

That 73 miles of the road are built and in operation, that the gradients and alignments are favourable, there being only one grade exceeding 53 feet per mile, and that one is 64 feet to the mile; that with one exception there is no curve of a less radius than 1,433 feet, and that the one exception is a curve of 953 feet radius.

That the roadbed is well and substantially built, the cuttings being 20 feet and the embankments 15 feet wide at sub-grade. Ample drainage is provided by substantial steel structures resting on massive masonry spanning the larger rivers, and steel plate girders resting on strong well built masonry spanning the streams of a lesser magnitude, whereas, the general drainage throughout the smaller rivulets has been passed through culverts constructed of sound cedar timber 10 x 10 inches square. The larger portion of the line through the cleared land is enclosed by a substantial post and board fence, whereas, on a small portion of the line, a wire fence has been erected. The permanent way is laid with 2,600 ties to the mile, the steel rails weighing 56 pounds to the yard connected with steel fish plates.

The road is well ballasted with a very fine quality of gravel, the station buildings are neat buildings of what I consider sufficient capacity for the requirements of the road, and the water service is good.

I think you will agree with me from the description I have given of the works that a really good road has been secured, fully up to the general standard of railways in Canada. At the same time, I think, you should insist on the 64 feet per mile grade being reduced to 53 feet, in making an arrangement for the acquisition of the road, if such be your intention, which I assume to be the case.

As you desire me to state the standard on which I would recommend the completion of the road to Chaudiere Bridge, supposing it to be a section of the Intercolonial Railway, upon that part of the subject, I would say, that the standard should be equal to that of the Intercolonial Railway as it now exists, and that the steel rails should not be less than 70 lbs. to the yard, with passenger, freight and other buildings of approved number, dimensions, and design.

If these suggestions be carried out, the company will have a good, substantial road throughout, the main line being 115 miles in length from Ste. Rosalie to Chaudiere Bridge with a Branch to Nicolet, 17 miles in length.

Should you finally decide to acquire the road, before the matter is absolutely closed I suggest it would be prudent to have an examination made into its condition. Of course, this season of the year is not favourable for making such an inspection, nor do I think it desirable that it should be made during the spring freshet or when the frost is coming out of the ground, but later on in the season when the roadbed is settled down into place, and any damage, which may have arisen from the spring freshets may be seen, is to my view the proper time to have the road looked over.

Before taking action in that direction, I shall await your instructions, as of course, if an arrangement for the acquisition of the road is not reached, it would be a useless expenditure to send out the inspecting engineer to examine the road.

I am, yours faithfully,

COLLINGWOOD SCHREIBER,
Chief Engineer of Dept. Railways and Canals.

The Honourable A. G. BLAIR,
Minister of Railways and Canals,
Ottawa.

EXTRACT from a Report of the Committee of the Honourable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency on the 24th March, 1897.

On a report dated 20th March, 1897, the Minister of Railways and Canals, stating that in the opinion of the Chief Engineer of Government railways and the General Manager of the Intercolonial Railway, in which opinion the Minister concurs, the extension of the Intercolonial Railway from its present terminus at Levis to Montreal, with a terminal in that city, will greatly increase the traffic and business of the Intercolonial Railway and place the Government railway system upon a much improved footing. The disadvantages under which the Intercolonial Railway has been operated, with its 1,200 miles of track traversing almost the entire length of the two provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and through a considerable section of the Province of Quebec, and terminating 170 miles distant from the great commercial city of Montreal, have been so obvious to railway men that such a condition of things would not have been tolerated if the road had belonged to private corporation.

The Minister states that the present western terminus of the Intercolonial system is at a small village on the south side of the St. Lawrence River, and connection with Montreal and the important business centres of the west is only possible over the Grand Trunk Railway. The latter company controls the rates between Montreal and Levis, and in consequence the Intercolonial Railway has been entirely dependent upon the Grand Trunk Company for such through traffic, East and West, as it has carried. The interest of the Grand Trunk to divert Montreal shipments for European ports to Portland, in preference to maritime ports has operated most unfavourably against the Intercolonial Railway doing any portion of the traffic, and must continue to do so as long as the Government railway system remains excluded at its western terminus from an important traffic augmenting centre. In this situation, the executive officers of the Intercolonial Railway have always felt that they were seriously handicapped in competing for direct business for Europe and the Maritime Provinces in one direction, and for west-bound traffic in the other. They have very properly regarded Montreal as the most convenient distributing centre, and to be shut out from that point has been to lose a vast volume of traffic that would pass over the Intercolonial Railway. At Montreal the most direct and best possible connections are available with the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific Railway systems, having their lines running throughout the most populous parts of Western Canada, reaching all the chief industrial and shipping centres of that section of the Dominion, and having connections at various points with the leading lines of the United States. With a satisfactory connection at Montreal, the managers of the Intercolonial are of opinion that they would then be in the best possible position to compete with rival lines for business from the West, which they have hitherto been unable to obtain in any considerable volume. The traffic agents of the Intercolonial could then canvass the field for business to and from the East, upon rates either made and controlled by themselves, or in regulating which they would have a potential influence.

The Minister further states that the officers of the Intercolonial Railway are of belief that by having command of the traffic to and from the Maritime Provinces, as well as Europe, they would be in a position to give the public a better and more rapid

train service. Under present conditions, however, the Intercolonial cars which are passed over to the Grand Trunk Railway from time to time for the carriage of freight frequently accumulate in the yards at Montreal, and lie there for considerable periods, idle and unproductive. This is both an inconvenience and a loss. By having control and supervision of the freight car stock in Montreal, the traffic manager will be better able to look after it and keep it rolling; so that the same quantity of rolling stock will, it is believed, serve a large purpose and earn a greater revenue than it now does.

The probability of a line of first class steamers on the Atlantic making their terminus during half the year at Halifax or St. John, being at an early date established, and the further probability of a line of freight steamers plying between Great Britain and the maritime ports in winter being considered it seems to the Minister of the utmost importance that the Intercolonial Railway should be early prepared to reap its share of the benefits certain to accrue from such a traffic.

The Minister observes, with respect to passenger traffic, that the existing conditions are unfavourable. Travellers naturally avoid the inconveniences and delays incident to transfers, and at Levis passengers must now be ferried across the St. Lawrence or be passed over to the Grand Trunk Railway. The drawbacks in this relation are intensified when the transfers take place at night or in the early morning, and the Minister states he is advised that the passenger business of the Intercolonial Railway might fairly be expected to increase when these transfers have been rendered unnecessary by the proposed connection with Montreal. Having regard to the probable establishment of a fast steamship service on the Atlantic, these considerations have special significance.

The general manager of Government railways, in summing up the advantages of the proposed extension, advises that, in his opinion, if this independent connection with Montreal is given to the Intercolonial Railway, a very large increase in the receipts and profits of the road will result therefrom.

The Minister states that in order to effect the extension now proposed at a moderate cost and to the best advantage, after a careful study of the situation, availing himself of the judgment and experience of the officials of the Department of Railways and Canals, and others competent to advise on the subject, has arrived at the conclusion: That an arrangement should, if possible, be made with the Grand Trunk Railway Company, for the use of that portion of their main line from Ste. Rosalie to Victoria Bridge, for the use of the bridge itself and the company's valuable and extensive terminal facilities in the city; that the Drummond County line projected from Ste. Rosalie to Chaudiere, and already constructed to within 32 or 33 miles of that point, should also be obtained either by lease or purchase; that the uncompleted link should be built by Government, or, if proceeded with by the Drummond County Railway Company and finished as expeditiously as possible by that company, should also be included in the arrangement respecting the other portions of the company's line, and that the bridge at Chaudiere, with the line to Levis, belonging to the Grand Trunk Railway Company—but in which the Drummond County Railway Company has obtained rights—should also be taken over from the last mentioned company.

No other possible road, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, can be compared with the one suggested, either as to grades or distances, so that it has not been deemed necessary to make any comparison with other routes.

The Minister further states, as the result of negotiations extending over a considerable period with the representatives of the two companies above mentioned, that he is enabled to submit for consideration terms and conditions upon which the Grand Trunk Company and the Drummond County Company will respectively agree to place their several properties as above described at the disposal of the Crown, should the policy be approved of bringing the Intercolonial Railway into the City of Montreal. These terms, the Minister ventures to believe, are as favourable as it is possible to secure under existing circumstances. Stating the proposition briefly, and free from details which would necessarily be incorporated in the extended contract, the Grand Trunk Company offers to lease for 99 years, with a covenant for renewal, at an annual rental of \$140,000, as full and unlimited use as the company itself enjoys, of its terminal facilities in the

City of Montreal, of the Victoria Bridge as it is at present or as it shall be after contemplated reconstruction, and all other line or lines of railway and property from the Victoria Bridge to Ste. Rosalie Station, the point at which the Grand Trunk Railway is intersected by the Drummond County Road.

The rental demanded for these privileges is apportioned by the Grand Trunk Railway over the three divisions of their property indicated above, as follows:—

For the terminals, \$62,500; for the bridge, \$40,000; and for the line of railway, \$37,500, making in the whole, the total rental mentioned—a sum which it is believed will not be considered unreasonable nor excessive, having regard to the value of the privileges acquired.

The offer finally made by the Drummond County Company is to lease to the Crown the Chaudiere and Levis portion of the railway now under contract by them from the Grand Trunk Railway Company at an annual rental of \$6,000 to complete according to the standard of the Intercolonial and lay with 70 pounds steel rails, with necessary station-houses, &c., the unfinished portion of their line to Chaudiere Bridge, and to lease this portion of the property, exclusive of the Chaudiere and Levis portion, to the Crown at an annual rental of \$64,000—the whole line, and parts of lines thus acquired, to bear an annual rental of \$70,000 for a term of 99 years.

The conveyances and contracts which are to be executed between the Drummond County Company and the Crown, if this proposed arrangement is concluded will contain covenants and conditions providing that a sufficient portion of the rental above stated shall be so applied as to extinguish all bonds issued by the Drummond County Company, which will exceed two millions of dollars (\$2,000,000) at the expiration of the lease, at which time the legal title to all the property of the company, held by the Crown under such lease, is to become vested in the Crown free from all incumbrances.

The Minister adds that it will be observed that neither of the above mentioned companies offers to sell their properties. So far as the Grand Trunk Company is concerned, the sale could not, for obvious reasons, be contemplated perhaps by either party. But as to the property of the Drummond County Company, he would have favoured a purchase in preference to a lease, had the company been disposed to enter into negotiations on that basis, being unwilling to do so, the only remaining alternative to the acceptance of the company's offer if the extension to Montreal is to be proceeded with, would be for the government to undertake the construction of a new line of railway, which would not only be parallel, but throughout its entire length would run contiguous to that of the Drummond County Company. The building of another contiguous line of railway by government to the existing line would, under the circumstances, very seriously impair, if it would not totally destroy, the property of the Drummond County Company, and unless it should be considered that the rental demanded by the company represents a capital sum greatly in excess of what it would cost the government to build a new line, or greatly in excess of any advantages which would be likely to accrue to the government by the acquisition of the existing line, it is doubtful if such a policy would commend itself to public approval. As to the cause of building such new line between the Chaudiere bridge and Ste. Rosalie, the chief engineer of government railways estimates that the sum of \$1,600,000 would be sufficient for the purpose; although it is only fair to the Drummond County Company to mention that the official statements and engineers reports received by the Department of Railways and Canals from time to time during the progress of the construction by the Drummond County Company, show the company's outlay for the portion of their line so far constructed to fall little if anything, short of the estimate of the chief engineer of the probable cost of the whole line. Possibly this difference may be to some extent accounted for by the present reduced cost of labour and materials—more especially the latter—and by the interest charges and commissions which were probably paid by the Drummond County Company in financing their undertaking in excess of what, under similar circumstances, would be the cost to the government.

The annual rental of \$64,000, exacted by the Drummond County Company represents, it will be observed, interest at 4 per cent upon the present cost of laying down a new line of railway over the same route, according to the estimate of the government engineer.

The Minister believes this rental will not be regarded as excessive when account is taken of the agreement to extinguish the Company's mortgage indebtedness prior to the expiry of the lease, and when the further important fact is considered that the Crown becomes entitled to the fee in the property at the termination of the lease, wholly free from incumbrance.

It is also not unworthy of mention that this company has been doing a very good business, although only operating a partially completed line and without through connections, its traffic has been continuously on the increase. Last year its gross receipts amounted to \$108,000, yielding a net return over all running expenses of \$30,000.

Such a business would be a valuable acquisition to the Intercolonial Railway as an adjunct to its through traffic, and in acquiring this railway from the Drummond County Company, in preference to building a new line which would have the Drummond County Company as an active, and doubtless a successful competitor for the local traffic, the government will be securing at a not unreasonable cost a most suitable road, over the best possible route, having an established and paying traffic, and without encountering the probability of future competition in respect of its local business.

The Minister, in view of the above considerations, feels warranted in recommending that the policy of extending the Intercolonial Railway to Montreal be approved, and that, subject to the sanction of Parliament, he be authorized to enter into contracts with the Grand Trunk Railway Company and the Drummond County Railway Company, respectively, as to the leasing of their properties above described in accordance with the terms usually expressed in such cases.

The committee submit the above recommendation for Your Excellency's approval.

(Sgd.) JOHN J. MCGEE,
Clerk of the Privy Council.

OTTAWA, 2nd June, 1897.

SIR,—In accordance with my instructions, I beg leave to report on the constructed portion of the Drummond County Line, in respect of its character and condition.

The line itself commences at Ste Rosalie Junction. The intermediate two miles which connect it with the Grand Trunk system is under the control of the St. Hyacinthe station master and the semaphore admitting ingress upon it, is under the direct control of that official.

The line is constructed for 73 miles to Moose Park. The first twenty-seven miles to Drummondville pass through a good farming district. The land generally is in excellent cultivation. Several small villages succeed each other between Ste Rosalie Junction and Drummondville, namely, St. Edward, St. Helene, St. Eugene, Duncan and St. Germain. Drummondville is the important place on the line. The following villages are then met: St. Cyrille, Carmel, Mitchell and St. Leonard.

St. Leonard Junction is nineteen miles from Drummondville; at this point a branch runs sixteen miles to Nicolet.

The Athabasca branch of the Grand Trunk is crossed near Maddington Falls and St. Wincelas, one mile and a half south-east of Aston Station.

Proceeding east from St. Leonard Junction the villages of St. Wincelas, Maddington Falls and Forestdale succeed, when the terminus of the present line is met at Moose Park.

I think it proper to premise my report, by remarking that the season of the year in which it is made, demands consideration, for it is not an act of justice in the first week of June to consider the condition of a roadbed with the spirit of exactness which might justly be exercised ten or twelve weeks later. At this date, the frost has not been four weeks out of the ground, and the first attention given to maintenance of the line has been to place it in proper security by renewing the ties, where most required, by lifting and adjusting the track and straightening the steel rails where necessity exacts. This imperative duty is the first consideration, while the removal of what in themselves are blemishes affecting the appearance of the line, are left to a later date. Another

duty is that of clearing out the ditches to enable them satisfactorily to fulfil the duties entailed upon them: unimpeded drainage. Consequently in many parts of the line bunch grass has sprouted over the roadbed which to an observer without practical experience does not suggest a favourable opinion of its character, while in fact, it does not affect the safety and character of the roadbed.

On the condition of the roadbed, it is my duty favourably to report. The ballast is of an excellent character, and there is plenty of it. It is not very neatly dressed off, as on older lines, but that is more a matter of appearance affecting the finished look of the work, than in any way a detriment injurious to the safety and character of the track. I have myself been on a train which travelled forty miles an hour, and I never felt the slightest anxiety as to the propriety of this speed.

I have reason to believe that there are occasions where specials have been run between Drummondville and St. Hyacinthe at the extreme rate of sixty miles an hour, and I do not believe that those acquainted with the condition of the track felt that any risk was being incurred during the journey. The outer portion of the track to Drummondville is cleared off generally, and the fencing in good condition. East of Drummondville, this same condition is by no means universal. There are spots where the light bush has yet to be removed. I cannot precisely give the extent of this ground where such work is necessary, but with a sufficient party, a few days would rectify it. Where the land is under cultivation, the fencing is regular and efficient. In the places where the line passes through a timbered country of light bush with a thick undergrowth, fencing has not been constructed, but no inconvenience arises to the line, for the bush itself is close and thick, and animals are not likely to stray through it.

It will thus be seen that in these 73 miles there is a good roadbed, well ballasted; the rails in line; the ditches freely carrying off the water, with regularity of different grades, the whole in efficient and satisfactory working order.

While what may be called the ornamental work of the roadbed may require attention to obtain the neatness observable in an older line and always agreeable to the eye, I have to report the line, to the extent named, to be in excellent condition.

I am, sir, your very obedient servant,

WILLIAM KINGSFORD,
Engineer in charge.

To the Engineer in Chief,
Department of Railways.

OTTAWA, 14th June, 1897.

COLLINGWOOD SCHREIBER, Esq., C.M.G.,
Chief Engineer Railways and Canals.

SIR,—Having made an inspection of the Drummond County Railway for a distance of about seventy (70) miles from Ste. Rosalie, I beg to submit the following brief report:—

I found the roadbed to be firm and in very good shape throughout, and, with the exception of three miles purposely left without ballast, in view of a contemplated change of alignment, well ballasted, the material being of exceptional excellent quality.

The rails are all in good condition, weighing 56 lbs. to the yard.

The grades are not excessive, the only point at which 1·00 per 100 is exceeded being at the St. Francis river, the approaches to which, on either side, are now 1·20 per 100. I understand the company are to reduce this grade before the road is taken over by the Government.

The percentage of curvature is exceptionally small, the curves with one exception (one of 6°) not exceeding 4° or a radius of 1,433 feet.

I may say, in this connection, that on my return journey, the train, consisting of an engine and combination car, made the distance of 68 miles in 90 minutes, including two stoppages, the last 28 miles being run in 30 minutes, without the least discomfort to the passengers on the train.

The principal bridges are those over the Black river, the two branches of the Nicolet and the Becancour. These are all fine substantial steel superstructures resting on massive well-built masonry abutments and piers.

There are five minor structures, ranging from 28 to 55 ft. spans, all steel girders resting on solid masonry abutments. There are no wooden structures of a span of over eight feet.

The station buildings are neat and in good condition. Three (3) of them, however, are incomplete, but are, I understand, to be finished before the road is accepted.

At Drummondville, in addition to the passenger station, there is a freight shed, repair shops equipped with engine, lathes, &c., for repairing cars.

Water tanks are provided at Drummondville and Forestdale stations.

The line is fenced throughout, except about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles through forest and swamp, for the most part with post and board fence; there is, however, a small quantity of barbed wire fence.

The fencing is generally in good condition, there being merely a few panels requiring straightening, which the officers of the company informed me would be put in shape before being handed over.

I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed.) E. V. JOHNSON.

OTTAWA, 15th June, 1897.

COLLINGWOOD SCHREIBER, Esq.,
Chief Engineer Railways and Canals.

SIR,—In accordance with your instructions I have made an inspection of the Drummond County Railway from its junction with the Grand Trunk Railway at Ste. Rosalie to the Duchesne River, a distance of seventy miles.

I found the line in excellent condition, fully ballasted with the exception of about three miles near the St. Francis River, the location of which is to be changed in order to reduce the gradients to 53 feet per mile—the track throughout is in very good condition the rails being 56 lbs. steel—and in good order, new ties were being put in where required.

All the bridges are of steel superstructure on very good cement masonry abutments and piers. At the St. Francis River there is at present 60 feet of trestle work, which is to be replaced with a permanent structure.

The line is fenced throughout with the exception of about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles through dense woods and swamp where fencing is not at present required.

The station buildings and sidings are amply sufficient for the traffic, some of the buildings require repairs and painting, which I was informed is to be done at once.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed.) THOMAS RIDOUT.